



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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MEMORANDUM FOR: NOAA Rating Officials

FROM: Eduardo J. Ribas 
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SUBJECT: FY08 Performance Planning, Five-Level Performance
Management System

This memo is for the attention of Rating and Approving Officials who supervise employees covered by the five-level performance management system. Those Rating Officials who supervise employees covered by the two-level or Demonstration Project performance management systems may disregard this message.

As each of you are finalizing the FY07 performance ratings for your direct reports, you should also be thinking about the content of FY08 performance plans and the strategic goals your office or organization wants to achieve during the fiscal year. All five-level performance plans must be completed, including all appropriate signatures, by November 30, 2007*. Below you will find more information about performance planning and related requirements.

*Wage Marine performance plans must be finalized by December 31, 2007.

Performance Planning - An Overview

Five-level performance plans are documented on the CD-430, Performance Management Record, which can be found at:

http://ocio.os.doc.gov/ITPolicyandPrograms/Electronic_Forms/FormsByNumber/DEV01_002506. A performance plan must contain at least three, but no more than five critical elements. Each critical element must be weighted at least 15%, and the total weight for all elements must be 100%. Weight does not reflect the amount of time spent on the project(s) covered by the critical element, but rather it reflects the importance of that element relative to other elements in the performance plan.

Each block on the first page of the CD-430 must be completed, including the three signature blocks at the bottom of the page. It is important that the Approving Official review, sign, and date the plan prior to presentation to the employee.

Cascaded Organizational Goals

One of the emphases of the five-level system is the linking of individual performance plans with NOAA and Department of Commerce (DOC) strategic goals. In other words, each employee at NOAA plays a role in advancing the NOAA and DOC mission(s), and it is the responsibility of the rating official to demonstrate this connection through performance planning and associated discussions. For all NOAA employees, DOC Strategic Goal 3, "Observe, protect and manage the Earth's resources to promote environmental stewardship," must be checked on each critical element page in the CD-430. Other DOC Strategic Goals may also be selected, as appropriate.

Next to the "Bureau Goal," insert one of the five NOAA mission goals listed below which relate to the critical element on that page. A Bureau Goal must be included for each critical element:

1. Protect, Restore, and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources Through an Ecosystem Approach to Management
2. Understand Climate Variability and Change to Enhance Society's Ability to Plan and Respond
3. Serve Society's Needs for Weather and Water Information
4. Support the Nation's Commerce with Information for Safe, Efficient, and Environmentally Sound Transportation
5. Provide Critical Support for NOAA's Mission

A more detailed explanation of each of the aforementioned mission goals can be found at:

http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/pdfs/STRATEGIC%20PLAN/Strategic_Plan_2006_FINAL_04282005.pdf.

Finally, for each critical element, a Senior Executive Service or office/unit goal should be inserted next to "SES/Organizational Goal." The performance plans of all SES employees necessarily link to NOAA's mission goals so an employee who helps the SES employee in his/her chain of command achieve Executive goals will also advance the NOAA and DOC missions.

Critical Element and Objective

The critical element and objective box must contain two items. First is a brief (several word) description of the project, program, or grouping of responsibilities covered on this critical element page. For instance, Customer Service, Leadership/Management, or Grants Management are all good examples of a brief element description.

The objective is a short phrase beginning with the word "To" that states the goal of the critical element: "To respond to internal and external customers, stakeholders, and the public."

More information about drafting critical elements can be found at:

<http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/performancegmt/fivelevel/fivelevelements.html>

Required Critical Elements*

There are three required critical elements under the five-level system. All covered employees must have a "Customer Service" element*. The Customer Service element is always the first element in a performance plan, and DOC has already established the required language for this element:

http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/pdfs/perfmgmt/custsvcelement_5lev.pdf.

The "Leadership" element is required for all supervisors under the five-level system. The prescribed language for this element can be found at:

http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/pdfs/perfmgmt/leadrshpelement_5lev.pdf.

Finally, all Property Accountability Officers, Property Management Officers, and Property Custodians have required elements which address property management. The language for these elements can be found at:

- [Property Accountability Officers](#)
- [Property Management Officers](#)
- [Property Custodians](#)

***Please be advised that the specific Customer Service element language ONLY applies to non-bargaining unit employees until our labor relations obligations have been fulfilled. The designated management representatives for your Line or Corporate office will notify you when the language can be added to the performance plans of bargaining unit employees in your**

organization.

Results of Major Activities

The five-level system now focuses on the results of critical elements, rather than the daily activities completed by the employee. In the "Results of Major Activities" block, the rating official should state at least three, but no more than six results that should be demonstrated by the employee. Only subjects and verbs should be included in the "Results" block; rating officials can define how they want their employees to perform in the "Criteria for Evaluation" block.

Some sample results are listed below with an explanation as to why the sample is either good or bad.

Result	Explanation	Revision
Writes reports	"Writes reports" is an activity; "Reports are written" is better because the result is defined.	Reports are written.
Proposals are submitted to funding agencies in compliance with funding agency requirements.	This is a well-written result.	No revision needed.
Downloads and displays QuickSCAT data	Sentence should be reversed so it is not activity based but results based.	QuickSCAT data are downloaded and displayed.
Supervisor is appraised of significant program requirements	This is a well-written result.	No revision needed.

Criteria for Evaluation

The "Criteria for Evaluation" block is where the rating official should define the type of performance he or she expects of a Level 3 performer on the critical element. The Criteria for Evaluation, or supplemental standards, should address quality, quantity, timeliness and/or cost-effectiveness. It is important not to create absolute standards or criteria which require perfect performance. An example of an absolute standard is: "All reports are submitted by established deadlines." A better way to state this standard is: "Most reports are submitted by established deadlines" because this allows for occasional missed deadlines due to valid reasons.

Here are some other examples of well-written supplemental standards:

- FOIA and Privacy Act inquiries are controlled and responded to within the 20-day time constraint mandated by law.
- Generally, accurate information is entered into the database within 3 days of the pay period ending.
- Writing reflects sound analytical thinking, presents concise, well-reasoned conclusions, and is usually free of grammatical and typographical errors.

Further information about drafting Criteria for Evaluation can be located at:

<http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/performancegmt/fivelevel/fivelevsupstandards.html>.

Sample Performance Plans and Other References

If you would like more help with drafting performance plans, please visit:

http://ohrm.os.doc.gov/Performance/prod01_003772 for copies of good five-level performance plans which have been approved by DOC. Information about the five-level system, in general, can also be found at:

- http://ohrm.os.doc.gov/Performance/prod01_001118 (DOC information) and
- <http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/performancegmt/fivelevel/fivelevelmain.htm> (NOAA information).

Reporting Requirements

All five-level plans are required to be in place by November 30, 2007, with the exception of Wage Marines whose plans must be in place by December 31, 2007. **By December 8, 2007*, each Line or Corporate Office must transmit the following documents to the servicing Workforce Management representative listed at:** <http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/performancegmt/fivelevel/07closeoutcontacts.html>:

- **CD-431, Performance Management Tracking System (PMTS) Certification Report:**
<http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/performancegmt/fivelevel/fivelevpmts.html>
- **Department of Commerce Performance Management System Certification Form:**
http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/pdfs/PMS_PlanCertification_FY2008.pdf

*The deadline for Wage Marines is January 11, 2008.

As always, if you have any questions about performance planning, the five-level system, or other related human resources matters, please do not hesitate to contact your servicing Human Resources Advisor:
http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/contact_lists.html.